

SENATE RESOLUTION 18

By Crutchfield

A RESOLUTION to bestow upon John S. Wilder the title of
“Speaker Emeritus of the Tennessee State
Senate.”

WHEREAS, on January 5, 1971, John S. Wilder was elected by his fellow members to the illustrious office of Speaker of the Senate for the Tennessee State Senate; and

WHEREAS, unknown to all at that time, Speaker Wilder would justly and faithfully preside over the Tennessee Senate for the next thirty-six years, a period in which he truly “made a difference,” and

WHEREAS, one of the longest serving legislative leaders in American history, John Shelton Wilder’s eighteen consecutive terms as Speaker of the Senate spanned the administrations of six Tennessee governors and seven presidents of the United States; and

WHEREAS, it was during his early tenure as Speaker that the legislative branch began to emerge from a subservient role to one of full and equal stature with the executive branch of Tennessee state government; and

WHEREAS, guided by a policy of fairness and respect toward every member, Speaker Wilder established an honorable record of inclusion by appointing the first African American male, the first female, and the first African American female to serve as chairs of Senate standing committees; and

WHEREAS, his tenure as Speaker witnessed numerous other historic milestones for the Senate, including the construction of a legislative plaza with offices and hearing rooms, the emergence of a strong and effective standing committee system, the establishment of professional legislative staff, the founding of the internship program, the computerization of the legislature, and the creation of an Internet Web site with live coverage available of both committee hearings and full Senate sessions; and

WHEREAS, the Senate shall always be the Senate under the legendary gaze of the gracious and benevolent gentleman from Fayette County, who is truly the father and architect of the modern day Tennessee Senate; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that in recognition of more than three decades of leadership and friendship and for the legacy of excellence and independence he has fostered for the institution he cherishes above all others, we hereby bestow upon John Shelton Wilder the official title "Speaker Emeritus of the Tennessee State Senate."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.